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6 Candidates' representational roles

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Abstract

Roles of representation are at the core of democracy, providing representative democracy with its content and form. The manner in which an elected representative ought to behave in his or her role as a representative has been highly debated since the dawn of the representative system. In this chapter, we examine how candidates running for electoral positions perceive the roles of elected representatives, conceptualised as the focus and style of representation. We present an overview of role perceptions in different countries and analyse how the perceptions vary according to career paths, attributes of the candidates' parties and the institutional setting of the electoral systems within which the candidates operate. We find that role perceptions are shaped by both patterns of socialisation and rational considerations created by the institutional context that surrounds politicians.

Introduction

In this chapter, we examine the perceptions that candidates have of their (potential) roles as political representatives and how these perceptions vary according to career paths, attributes of the candidates' parties and the institutional settings of the electoral systems within which they operate. Roles of representation are at the very core of modern democracy (Eulau et al., 1959; Pitkin, 1967); they provide representative democracy with its content and form and can, as such, be regarded as a manifestation of the link between voters and representatives. The manner in which an elected representative ought to behave in his or her role has been highly debated since the dawn of the representative system. An early point of reference with a substantial impact on this debate is the oft-cited speech by Edmund Burke to the electors of Bristol in 1774. Burke, in his speech, advocates that members of parliament (MPs) should be unbound by instructions from the constituency and look after the common interest of the nation, rather than local or incompatible interests (Thomassen, 1994, p. 238; Judge, 1999, p. 53). As later noted by Eulau et al., (1959, p. 744), Burke mixes what are considered as two different principles today, namely, which interests the representative ought to defend in cases of conflicting expectations, and what the representative should be bound by other than his or her conscience. These two questions are often referred to as the *focus* and *style* of representation.

Empirical research on role perceptions suggests that politicians tend to offer different answers to the normative question of how elected representatives ought to act – depending on their individual characteristics and position within their respective parties, as well as the institutional settings that surround them (Blondel and Müller-Rommel, 2007; Wessels, 2007). These findings can be explained by not only socialisation patterns (Önnudóttir, 2016) but also rational responses to an incentive structure created by the political system (Wessels, 1999).

In this chapter, we examine candidates' role perceptions in a number of Western democracies with regard to whose interests a representative should further (focus of representation) and with what degree of independence the task should be carried out (style of representation). We also set out to analyse systematic patterns regarding variations in candidates' role perceptions according to individual and party characteristics, as well as the incentive structure provided by the electoral system. Hitherto, most empirical studies on role perceptions have been single-country studies, focusing exclusively on MPs (Jenny and Müller, 2012). Our study, however, is based on data from the Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS). These data enable us to include up to 7,112 candidates running for 84 parties in 13 different political systems, which involves a significantly larger pool of politicians from different countries than shown in previous studies on role perceptions.

By expanding the scope of the general focus of studies in the field and including not only elected representatives but all candidates running for national elections, several advantages are gained. Candidates can be considered as active party members – reflecting a broader view of politicians, which is not limited to only those who are elected. The small n-problem is also resolved, with reliable advance testing of between-group variations between parties, different sociodemographic strata, contextual constellations or levels of party hierarchy. We acknowledge that once elected, candidates may not always be able to act fully in accordance with their representational preferences and that nonelected candidates might have a different view on how representation ought to work compared to incumbents. The preferences of candidates generally indicate their perception of the ideal representative process, while task definitions measured among MPs (Esaiasson, 2000) can be considered more as a self-evaluation of their work performance.

We begin this chapter with a review of the literature on focus and style of representation before outlining the hypotheses that led to this present study. We then present our research design, including the data and operationalisation, and our empirical analyses before finishing off with concluding remarks.

The focus and style of representation

There are many different ways to classify roles of representation (Wahlke et al., 1962; Searing, 1994; Rehfeld, 2009; Blomgren and Rozenberg, 2012), partly reflecting a theoretical debate on how representation ought to be demonstrated under different circumstances. In a seminal study with substantial impact on subsequent empirical studies of representational roles, Eulau et al. (1959) make a distinction between the *focus* and the *style* of representation. The focus of

representation is about which group the representatives consider themselves to represent, often divided into the constituency (or different sections of voters from the constituency) or the nation as a whole. The style of representation is, in turn, about what criterion the representatives ought to use when making decisions. The original classification of style includes trustees and voter delegates, where trustees base their decision on their own judgement, while voter delegates follow the will of the voters regardless of their own opinion.

The focus and styles of representation can partly depend on each other. Those who are party delegates in style could be more likely to consider their party as their focus of representation. Trustees could be more likely to consider themselves as representatives of the nation as a whole, and voter delegates could be more likely to consider their constituency as their focus of representation. Even if styles and focus of representation can overlap to a certain extent, there is a difference. While the style of representation refers to what criterion representatives should base their decision-making on, the focus of representation refers to the group of people they consider themselves to represent – regardless of whether they are trustees, partisans or delegates. We, therefore, consider it relevant to analyse separately these two concepts, focus and styles of representation.

The classical way of conceiving roles of representation in terms of style and focus departs from an individualistic perception of the representational process, which was developed in the US but fits poorly in a European context with strong parties. In later European studies, it therefore became common to supplement both the style and focus of representation with party-oriented categories. For the style of representation, this implies adding a party delegate role to the original classification of trustees and voter delegates. Examining representation in France, Converse and Pierce (1986) demonstrate that the party delegate style, together with the original two concepts of trustees and voter delegates, is better at capturing the practice of political representation. Rozenberg and Blomgren (2012) argue that this same three-fold classification is linked to both a normative and a philosophical debate on representation, with the major question being how elected representatives should make decisions in modern democracies. These three styles reflect the different sources representatives use, or claim to use, when making decisions as representatives, specifically when they are confronted with conflicting opinions or expectations. Within the framework of our study, we use this three-fold classification.

The focus of representation is composed of various subjects and is defined quite coherently by various scholars. Eulau et al. (1959, p. 755) mention territories, parties, pressure groups or administrative organisations as units with which a representative may identify himself or herself. Eulau and Karps (1977, p. 248) locate three foci, namely, territories (nation, region, state, district or any other territorial level); religious, ethnic, economic and ideological groups; and individual persons who contact their MP when they need assistance with a particular case. Esaiasson (2000, p. 55) supplements the latter categorisation by adding party as a focus (Brack, Costa and Teixeira, 2012, p. 387). It should be noted that the various foci are not necessarily mutually exclusive but can be held simultaneously (Eulau et al., 1959, p. 745). In this study, we chose to concentrate on

the classical Burkean division between the two most commonly researched foci, the local and the national focus of representation, complemented by a partisan focus.

Blomgren and Rozenberg (2012) argue that studies on representative roles became antiquated in the 1980s due to the decline in the use of representational roles as a concept in social science, lack of coherent findings and diffusion of how the concepts of roles were to be defined. This has, however, changed, and in the last two decades or so, a number of studies have been published on the topic (Esaiasson, 2000; Wessels, 2007; Brack et al., 2012; Önnudóttir, 2014; André, Bradbury and Depauw, 2015). Two likely reasons for the renewed interest are easier access to comparative data on the topic and the fact that recent empirical studies have contributed more consistent findings, creating a more robust theoretical, as well as empirical, platform for studies in the field. Additionally, in the recent wave of studies, scholars have been less interested in normative expectations concerning the superiority of certain roles (e.g., that delegates should be, de facto, closer to voters and represent them "better") and more directed toward mapping, explaining and understanding variations in role perceptions. Many of these more recent studies of representational roles use distinctions, as described in the work of Eulau et al. (1959), as a basis for a more detailed view of role perceptions (Rehfeld, 2009). Regardless of the criticism directed toward the classification by Eulau et al., it appears as if it broaches core elements of democratic representation – that is, whom to represent and how.

Explaining role perceptions

Empirical research on roles of representation has attracted its fair share of attention, mainly focusing on elected representatives' task definitions (Wahlke et al., 1962; Gunlicks, 1969; Gross, 1978; Converse and Pierce, 1979; Studlar and McAllister, 1996; Katz, 1997; Esaiasson, 2000). Several scholars have also devoted attention to how institutions and the electoral context shape the representative process (Costa et al., 2012). This approach often departs from a rational choice perspective and assumes that the roles representatives adopt are strategic choices based on a calculus of what helps them to reach their goals, whether that is to get selected or elected (Strøm, 2012).

Many studies confirm that role perceptions and the behaviour of representatives are shaped by the *incentive structure* provided by the electoral institutions via candidate selection, district magnitude and ballot structure (Lancaster, 1986; Carey and Shugart, 1995; Crisp et al., 2004; Wessels, 2007). Parties are considered as key actors via their role as gatekeepers in control of candidate selection. The more power the party holds over candidate selection and the more dependent candidates are on the party for election, the more likely the candidates are to be party delegates (Wessels and Giebler, 2011; Zittel, 2012; Önnudóttir, 2016) and, hence, perceive the party as their main principal (compared to the voters or the district). The incentive structure is also shaped by the size of the constituency and the ballot structure, where representatives in single-member districts or in proportional electoral systems with open or flexible ballots tend to be more constituency-oriented

than others (Valen et al., 2000; Shugart et al., 2005; Pilet, Freire and Costa, 2012; von Schoultz and Wass, 2016).

Other scholars have emphasised that role perceptions are shaped by *socialisation processes* (Önnudóttir, 2016) – where personal experiences, as well as cultural factors, vary across countries and parties. Önnudóttir (2016) points to effects across office- versus policy-seeking parties, where the trustee style is more common in the former. Furthermore, she demonstrates notable differences in styles of representation across countries and party types. Irish MPs are, for example, more likely to follow the party line and emphasise the party delegate role, while German and Icelandic candidates tend to perceive themselves as trustees. The voter delegate style, in turn, is more common in Eastern Europe, and it is especially pronounced among nationalistic populist parties. These tendencies indicate that there are, indeed, differences in styles of representation across countries, political systems and party types, but less is known about why these differences exist.

Departing from previous research, we will outline a set of hypotheses to be tested in the empirical section. When it comes to the *focus of representation*, we consider three different factors that we expect will shape the way politicians define their task: party type, district magnitude and ballot structure. For party types, it can be considered that niche parties or parties that focus on specific segments of voters or claim to represent specific groups – such as regional parties, ethnic parties and even agrarian parties – are more likely to promote a local focus among their candidates. The reasoning is that these parties have a history of campaigning on specific issues, one that is often tied to a specific area or a particular group with a geographical locus.

For district magnitude and ballot structures that are of systemic nature and hence shared by all candidates running for electoral positions in a specific country or constituency, previous research has demonstrated that smaller district magnitude (Wessels, 1999) and more open ballot structures (Farrell and Scully, 2010) increase the likelihood for MPs to focus on their constituency. Consistent with this finding, Zittel (2012) observes that candidates running in single-member districts in Germany and candidates with better chances of winning are more likely to focus on the district. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that Nordic MPs from peripheral constituencies, which are often small MP districts, are more prone to promote geographical interests (Valen et al., 2000).

Two mechanisms are likely to drive the finding that smaller district magnitude encourages a constituency focus. First, settings with fewer available representatives (and, hence, less diversity) focus more on the individual representative (or representatives) rather than on the party or the various groups that these few (or single) candidates represent. This, in turn, is likely to push the campaign toward issues that unite a larger number of voters from the constituency rather than attract only certain subsections of constituency voters. Second, it is likely that when district magnitude is low, politicians are more accustomed to view constituency service as part of the representative task. This is because relatively few representatives are available and there is an electoral incentive for politicians to focus on their constituency.

The open ballot structure encourages candidates to focus on their district since such focus can help them get (re)elected. Open lists come with high levels of intra-party competition, which provides candidates with a strong incentive to attract personal followers rather than cultivate the reputation of the party (Carey and Shugart, 1995). These personal followers are often recruited based on a local connection related to the idea of candidates as agents of local interests, knowing the area and its interests (Shugart et al., 2005). Regarding the *focus of representation*, we developed the following hypotheses:

H1: *Party types*: Candidates of regional parties (including agrarian parties) and ethnic parties are more likely to consider themselves representatives of their districts.

H2: *Electoral system*: Under a lower district magnitude, candidates are more likely to consider themselves as representatives of their districts and less likely to consider themselves as representatives of their parties or the nation as a whole.

H3: *Electoral system*: Under the open ballot structure, candidates are more likely to consider themselves as representatives of their district and less likely to consider themselves as representatives of their parties or the nation as a whole.

When it comes to the *styles of representation*, previous research points toward the effects of socialisation, working through career paths and ties to the party. The impact of socialisation can take various forms – depending on, among other things, the structure of the selection process and the status of candidates within his or her party at different time periods. The factors we consider in our analyses are whether the candidates have been elected as MPs (incumbency) and the length of party membership – both of which, we argue, lead to socialisation effects based on different types of mechanisms. For the length of party membership, we suggest this would promote the party delegate style since it is likely to enhance feelings of loyalty toward the party and fellow party members. However, once incumbents, we hypothesise that representatives are more likely to adopt a trustee style since this position is likely to promote expertise and political self-confidence to act in a more independent way. Furthermore, a greater tendency for MPs to act as independent trustees can also be due to a greater room for manoeuvre created by electoral security and the perception that an MP is considered more valuable to the party than an unelected candidate. These two arguments, that the length of party membership promotes the party delegate style and that incumbency promotes the trustee style, do not have to be in contradiction in the sense that they cancel each other out. Rather, the arguments reflect the importance of where in his or her career each politician is situated.

For the effect of the electoral system, we again find it plausible that the ballot structure and district magnitude matter in deciding the style of representation that politicians adhere to. A closed party ballot structure, with no chance for candidates to either move up or down on the list, places candidates' electoral fortunes in the hands of the party and causes a rational candidate to consider the party as his or her main principal. It is, therefore, likely that closed lists promote the party delegate style. Higher district magnitude, in turn, endorses diversity and points to a greater campaign focus on different parties and less on a few individual candidates. A high district

magnitude is, therefore, likely to promote the party delegate style, whereas a low one would promote either the voter delegate or the trustee style. Regarding *styles of representation*, we developed the following hypotheses:

H4: *Socialisation*: Incumbents are more likely to be trustees and less likely to be voter or party delegates.

H5: *Socialisation*: The longer candidates have been party members, the more likely they are to be party delegates.

H6: *Electoral system*: Under a more closed ballot structure, candidates are more likely to be party delegates and less likely to be trustees or voter delegates.

H7: *Electoral system*: Under a high district magnitude, candidates are more likely to consider themselves as party delegates and less likely to be voter delegates and trustees.

Research design, data and analysis

Response variables: focus and styles of representation

To outline role perceptions across countries and test our formulated hypotheses, we used data from the CCS. Our response variables measured two constructs: focus and styles of representation. Regarding focus of representation, candidates were asked to rank different groups that an elected member of parliament should represent. The question posed was the following: *There are different opinions about whom an elected member of parliament should primarily represent. What is your opinion?* The different foci included were:

- own voters in the constituency/own party voters in the constituency;
- all citizens in the constituency;
- the party electorate at large;
- members of a social group; and
- the (country) citizenry;

For focus of representation, we created a variable with four different categories representing the focus that candidates give the highest priority: local (all constituency options), party (national), the nation (citizenry) and interest groups. These four categories constituted four dummy variables: those who rank each group as no. 1 (1) or not (0). Because of the low popularity of the interest group focus, we chose to exclude it from the empirical analysis. It is noted that those candidates coded as having a local or a constituency-level focus are both candidates who said that they should primarily represent their own voters or their own party voters in their constituency[1] and those who said that they should represent all citizens in the constituency. This means that the local focus can also include a party focus, but it is a party focus within a certain region, and for that reason, we

consider it meaningful to categorise it as a local focus, regardless of whether that is a focus on all or some of their constituents. An overview of the proportion of candidates in each country that claims each focus can be seen in Table 6.1, which shows which countries and elections were included in our models for focus of representation.

It is notable that the national party focus is the least common focus candidates report, at least as we have classified focus of representation. In the Netherlands, half of the candidates hold a national party focus, but the proportions are much smaller in other countries. The main contrast seems to be between a local focus (including a local party focus) and a national citizen focus. The four countries that rank highest on the national citizen focus are Greece, Iceland, Italy and Portugal; those that rank highest on the local focus are Australia, Canada, Ireland and Norway. Explanations for those differences are suggested here. In the case of Ireland and Canada, the strong emphasis on the local focus could be due to a low district magnitude. This does not, however, explain the high rankings of the local focus in Norway and Australia because these countries have, on average, a higher district magnitude. The differences between countries could also be due to the differences in political culture and political discourses. It should also be noted that the percentages in Table 6.1 do not indicate whether there are differences across parties

Table 6.1 Candidates' focus of representation per country and election

Election	Local focus/constituency level focus (%)[a]	National party focus (%)	National citizen focus (%)	Group focus (%)	Total
Australia 2007	64.9	8.1	26.7	0.2	445
Canada 2008	68.6	1.6	29.7	0.0	306
Greece 2007	36.4	1.1	59.9	2.7	187
Finland 2011	42.4	6.9	46.6	4.1	875
Iceland 2009	28.8	0.0	68.5	2.6	267
Ireland 2007	75.9	3.5	19.4	1.2	170
Italy 2013	25.2	14.0	58.6	2.2	587
Netherlands 2006	8.1	51.6	37.3	3.1	161
Norway 2009	77.3	3.5	18.6	0.5	958
Portugal 2009	38.7	5.0	55.8	0.5	199
Portugal 2011	40.6	2.2	55.6	1.7	180

[a]Into local focus are combined those who either focus on own/own party voters or all citizens in the constituency.

For styles of representation, we use the question: How should a member of parliament vote in parliament if …

(a) the voters in his/her constituency have one opinion and his/her party takes a different position? (vote according to the party's opinion/vote according to the voters' opinion);

(b) if his/her own opinion on an issue does not correspond with the opinion of the voters in his/her constituency? (vote according to his or her own opinion/vote according to the voters' opinion); and

(c) if his/her own opinion on an issue does not correspond with his/her party's position? (vote according to his or her own opinion/vote according to the party's opinion).

These items were recoded into three different categories: those who responded "the voters' opinion" in items (a) and (b) were classified as voter delegates, those who responded "the party's opinion" in items (a) and (c) were classified as party delegates and those who responded "the MP's own opinion" in items (b) and (c) were classified as trustees. Table 6.2 provides an overview of the classification for each of the countries and elections included in our models for styles of representation. The approach we applied resulted in a very low proportion of non-classifiable candidates – respondents who chose "the party's opinion" in item (a), "the voters' opinion" in item (b) and "the MP's own opinion" in item (c).

The variances between different styles of representation are much greater compared to the focus of representation (in which candidates of different countries mainly emphasised one type of focus). However, in no country or election does the majority of candidates promote the voter delegate style; rather, the contrast seems to be more between the party delegate style and the trustee style. Again, there are some notable country differences. For example, the party delegate style is the most popular one among Irish and Norwegian candidates, while the trustee style is the most popular one among candidates in Iceland and Switzerland.

Table 6.2 Style of representation and elections

Elections	Party delegates (%)	Voter delegates (%)	Trustees (%)	Nonclassifiable (%)	Total
Australia 2007	28.7	36.9	30.6	3.7	428
Denmark 2011	34.1	4.8	57.5	3.7	273
Finland 2011	13.5	24.5	54.3	7.7	871
Greece 2007	36.3	23.1	33.5	7.1	182
Iceland 2009	12.0	19.1	65.2	3.7	325
Ireland 2007	51.0	22.9	22.2	3.9	153
Italy 2013	25.8	33.5	35.7	4.9	647
Netherlands 2006	46.7	5.3	44.7	3.3	152
Norway 2009	52.4	17.6	23.4	6.5	964
Portugal 2009	24.5	30.2	38.0	7.3	192
Portugal 2011	21.7	35.8	37.2	5.3	226
Switzerland 2007	13.0	15.9	61.8	9.2	1,411
Switzerland 2011	9.9	19.3	67.4	3.5	1,288

Explanatory variables

In our models, we tested the impact of district magnitude[2] and ballot structure[3] on both the focus and the styles of representation. In addition, we tested the impact of party type on focus of representation and career path socialisation (incumbency)[4] and party socialisation (years of party membership)[5] on styles of representation. District magnitude was a continuous variable, which varied from 1 (single-member districts) to 150. Ballot structure was coded into two dummy variables, using open ballot structure as the reference group and contrasting it with a closed party ballot structure and medium or weak preference ballots. Party types were based on the classification of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). Nationalistic parties were contrasted with other party types (ecology parties, left-wing parties, liberal parties, right-wing parties, regional/ethnic/agrarian parties and other party types). For incumbency, we contrasted those who were or have been incumbents and years of party membership on a continuous scale.

Control variables

We controlled for various other variables that have been found to impact focus and style of representation – candidates' left-right self-placement, left-right distance between candidates and their parties and candidates' perceived chances of winning and gender (Wahlke et al., 1962; Davidson, 1969; Bell and Price, 1975; Brack et al., 2012; Zittel, 2012). These were drawn from the CCS data.

Analysis

Given the structure of our hypotheses and data, we needed to apply a multilevel model technique. It could be argued that a four- or five-level model is appropriate because the data are structured with individual candidates nested within parties, nested within districts, nested within elections and nested within countries. We will, however, opt for a simpler model, using three levels, in which we consider that candidates are nested within parties and elections, and here we present each in turn. Table 6.3 gives an overview of the intra-class correlations of several null models. As can be observed when using a two-level model, the one with individuals nested within parties always explains more of the variance of the response variable than the other two-level models. It can also be observed that in three-level models, with candidates nested within parties and elections, both the country and the party levels explain much of the variance, with the party level always explaining more. Thus, we are confident that a three-level model, with individuals, party and election, is an appropriate structure for our models.

Table 6.3 Intra-class correlations of the null models

	Intra-class correlation				Intra-class correlation	
	2 levels				3 levels	
	Individual and country	Individual and election	Individual and district	Individual and party	Party level	Election level
Focus of representation						
Local	0.27	0.25	0.20	0.32	0.30	0.26
Party	0.43	0.42	0.26	0.54	0.47	0.41
National	0.16	0.15	0.12	0.19	0.19	0.14
Style of representation						
Party delegate	0.17	0.17	0.07	0.24	0.23	0.14
Voter delegate	0.10	0.11	0.04	0.14	0.16	0.10
Trustee	0.12	0.13	0.05	0.20	0.20	0.10

We ran six multilevel models altogether, with three levels (individual candidates nested within parties that are nested within countries). The first three models (Table 6.4) analyse the focus of representation divided into a local focus, a party focus and a national focus. These are followed by three models for styles of representation (Table 6.5): one for the party delegate style, one for the voter delegate style and one for the trustee style.

As shown in Table 6.4, our results for the effects of focus of representation are mixed, but all of our outlined hypotheses gained some support. The first hypothesis (H1), which states that candidates of regional/ethnic/agrarian parties are more likely to have a local focus, is supported, at least when those are contrasted with candidates of nationalistic parties. Our second hypothesis (H2), which states that under a lower district magnitude, candidates are more likely to consider themselves as representatives of their district and less likely to consider themselves as representatives of their party or the nation as a whole, is also partly supported. A high district magnitude appears to promote a partisan focus, while its impact on local and national focus is negligible. The third hypothesis (H3) is also partly supported. Open ballots are more likely to promote a local focus, compared to weak preference ballots. However, ballot structure seems to have a negligible impact on whether a party or a national focus is promoted.

Table 6.4 Focus of representation (multilevel models)

Response variables focus of representation	Null model	Local coef. (std.err.)	Null model	Party coef. (std. err.)	Null model	National coef. (std. err.)
Constant	–0.15 (0.307)	–0.03 (0.495)	–3.28*** (0.488)	–2.70** (0.834)	–0.37 (0.226)	–0.34 (0.500)
Individual-level variables						
Left-right distance between candidate and his/her party		–0.03 (0.040)		–0.07 (0.083)		0.03 (0.040)
Left-right self-placement		0.06* (0.025)		–0.05 (0.049)		–0.03 (0.024)
Chances of winning (1=could not win, 5=could not lose)		–0.01 (0.042)		–0.12 (0.081)		0.05 (0.040)
Is or has been an incumbent		–0.28* (0.139)		0.12 (0.283)		0.19 (0.136)
Years of party membership		0.01 (0.004)		–0.01 (0.009)		–0.003 (0.004)
Female		0.12 (0.087)		0.11 (0.170)		–0.15+ (0.086)
Party-level variables						
Party type (ref. group: nationalistic parties)						
Ecology parties		–0.17 (0.451)		0.69 (0.832)		–0.31 (0.445)
Left-wing parties		0.22 (0.386)		–0.40 (0.797)		–0.37 (0.387)
Liberal parties		0.18 (0.399)		–0.86 (0.834)		–0.17 (0.398)
Right-wing parties		0.28 (0.384)		–0.42 (0.790)		–0.30 (0.382)
Regional, ethnic, agrarian parties		0.96* (0.446)		–0.32 (0.885)		–1.12* (0.457)
Other party types		0.22 (0.453)		–0.15 (0.893)		–0.32 (0.444)
Election-level variables						
District magnitude		–0.004 (0.003)		0.02** (0.006)		–0.001 (0.003)
Ballot structure (ref. group: strong preference or candidate ballot)						
Party ballot		–0.66 (0.427)		–0.19 (0.423)		0.69 (0.437)
Weak or medium preference ballot		–2.36** (0.894)		0.54 (0.986)		0.29 (0.868)
Random effects parameters, estimate (std. err)						
Elections (constant)	0.98 (0.227)	0.62 (0.151)	1.47 (0.388)	0.37 (0.291)	0.71 (0.173)	0.64 (0.157)
Parties (constant)	0.40 (0.076)	0.30 (0.071)	0.72 (0.154)	0.57 (0.156)	0.38 (0.078)	0.30 (0.077)
AIC	3,636.508	3,628.272	1,256.324	1,250.899	3,698.518	3,703.487
BIC	3,654.527	3,736.387	1,274.343	1,359.014	3,716.537	3,811.602

Observations: 3,000. Parties: 61. Elections: 11.

*Response variables are candidates' focus of representation. Significance levels: +p<0.01; ***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05.

Moving on to the analysis of the styles of representation (Table 6.5), we find support (full or partly) for all of our outlined hypotheses concerning the impact of socialisation and the structure of the electoral system. Regarding socialisation, we hypothesised that incumbents are more likely to be trustees (career path socialisation) and less likely to be voter or party delegates (H4), and that years of party membership (party socialisation) promotes the party delegate style (H5). Regarding the electoral system, we hypothesised that the closed ballot structure promotes the party delegate styles and makes candidates less likely to be trustees or voter delegates (H6) and that a high district magnitude makes candidates more likely to be party delegates and less likely to be voter delegates or trustees (H7). Under open ballots, candidates were more likely to promote a voter delegate style when contrasted with weak or medium preferential ballots. In the case of incumbency, those who were or who have been incumbents were more likely to promote the trustee style and less likely to be voter delegates. Incumbency does, however, have a negligible impact on the party delegate style. Years of party membership promotes the party delegate style, whereas the ballot structure does not seem to be related to any of the styles of representation. In line with our hypothesis, we found that candidates under a high district magnitude were more likely to be party delegates and less likely to be voter delegates, while district magnitude had a negligible relation with the trustee style.

Even if we did not present hypotheses about the impacts of party types and only controlled for those in our models about styles of representation, it is notable that they do seem to have some impact. Here we highlight that in the case of ecology parties, candidates are less likely to emphasise the party delegate and voter delegate styles, and more likely to emphasise the trustee style. This could be due to those parties being more likely to promote policies under which candidates consider that elected representatives are granted a mandate to use their own judgement for the sake of the environment, meaning that they promote themselves as experts on environmental policies and consider that voters have granted them a mandate to make decisions based on their own expertise. Whether this is the case is an open question but a clear avenue for future research.

Table 6.5 Styles of representation (multilevel models)

Response variables focus of representation	**Null model**	**Party delegate coef. (std. err.)**	**Null model**	**Voter delegate coef. (std.err.)**	**Null model**	**Trustee coef. (std.err)**
Constant	–0.97***	–0.89+	–1.64***	–0.37	–.26	–1.10*
	(0.237)	(0.481)	(0.195)	(0.366)	(.202)	(0.458)
Individual-level variables						
Left-right distance between candidate and his/her party		–0.14***		0.04		0.08**
		(0.039)		(0.039)		(0.032)
Left-right self-placement		–0.03		–0.01		0.03
		(0.025)		(0.023)		(0.021)
Chances of winning (1 = could not win, 5 = could not lose)		0.07+		–0.13**		0.02
		(0.038)		(0.044)		(0.035)
Is or has been an incumbent		–0.11		–0.51**		0.43***
		(0.130)		(0.162)		(0.118)
Years of party membership		0.02***		–0.01**		–0.003
		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.003)
Female		–0.08		0.28**		–0.18**
		(0.080)		(0.084)		(0.068)
Party-level variables						
Party type (ref. gr.: nationalistic parties)						
Ecology parties		–1.08**		–1.13***		1.42***
		(0.404)		(0.306)		(0.375)
Left-wing parties		–0.28		–0.81**		0.53
		(0.354)		(0.230)		(0.337)
Liberal parties		–0.55		–0.61*		0.68+
		(0.373)		(0.279)		(0.353)
Right-wing parties		–0.48		–0.34		0.42
		(0.335)		(0.249)		(0.321)
Regional, ethnic, agrarian parties		–0.41		–0.98*		0.69
		(0.484)		(0.385)		(0.464)
Other party types		–0.45		0.04		–0.10
		(0.413)		(0.310)		(0.395)
Election-level variables						
District magnitude		0.01***		–0.01**		–0.00002
		(0.003)		(0.003)		(0.003)
Ballot structure (ref. gr. strong preference or candidate ballot)						
Party ballot		–0.08		0.34		–0.05
		(0.489)		(0.318)		(0.471)
Weak or medium preference ballot		–0.23		–1.04*		0.49
		(0.674)		(0.505)		(0.644)
Random effects parameters, estimate (Std. err)						
Elections (constant)	0.79 (0.179)	0.74 (.171)	0.63 (.156)	0.46 (.131)	0.66 (.159)	0.71 (168)
Parties (constant)	0.61 (0.076)	0.53 (0.071)	0.49 (0.074)	0.32 (0.069)	0.62 (0.074)	0.52 (0.067)
AIC	4,839.825	4,799.145	4,399.42	4,303.16	6,084.699	6,054.379
BIC	4,859.309	4,916.051	4,418.904	4,420.065	6,104.183	6,171.284

Observations: 4,889. Parties: 84. Elections: 13.

*Response variables are candidates' styles of representation. Significance levels: +p<0.01; ***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05.

Concluding discussion

In this chapter, we have established that there are differences in how candidates perceive their roles as representatives (elected or not). Dividing roles of representation into focus and styles of representation, we found considerable differences across and within countries. Our analyses demonstrate that some of these differences can be explained by socialisation factors and the incentive structure within which candidates operate.

Our findings for the *focus of representation* – which relates which group candidates prioritise as the most important one to represent and is divided into a local, partisan and national focus – are mixed. Party types seem to matter; candidates of regional/ethnic/agrarian parties are more likely to emphasise a local focus and less likely to emphasise a national one when compared with candidates of nationalistic parties. This could indicate that those types of parties (regional, ethnic and agrarian) are more used to campaigning on and emphasising specific policy issues related to subgroups of voters with a specific geographical base. We acknowledge that the agrarian party type might be considered an outdated category and that parties that have been categorised as agrarian parties in the CSES data are considered former agrarian parties. However, we argue that the history of these parties, as advocates for rural areas and farmers, is likely to have spurred a party culture that emphasises the importance of local interests and representation.

Regarding district magnitude, we hypothesised that a candidate nominated in a small member district (i.e., low district magnitude) is more likely to hold a local focus and less likely to promote a party focus or a national focus. The effects, however, are negligible and statistically insignificant. We did, however, discover that high district magnitude promotes a partisan focus, which can be seen as the opposite side of the coin. Large districts elect more representatives, which, in turn, allows greater room for diversity and ideological differences and is likely to stimulate a role perception that departs from the party focus, rather than the local or national focus.

Concerning the ballot structure, we tested whether candidates were more likely to consider themselves as representatives of their districts under open ballots – that is, in the context where preferential voting and personal vote-earning behaviour among candidates is more prevalent. Our findings in this regard were mixed. We did find that strong preferential voting promotes a local focus (as hypothesised) but only when contrasted with medium or weak preferential voting and not when contrasted with a closed ballot structure (but the direction was as expected). However, it is not surprising that electoral systems with strong preferential voting promote a local focus compared to weak or medium preferential voting (so-called flexible lists). Open lists create strong incentives for candidates to run a personalised campaign, and within open-list systems, there is usually a high level of intra-party competition (Carey and Shugart, 1995). It is well known that voters under such systems use local attributes – i.e., attributes that signal that the candidate "knows the area and its interests" (Shugart et al., 2005) – as information shortcuts when deciding which candidates to support, and that most candidates campaign and win large shares of their votes on their "home turf" (von Schoultz, 2018). Such voter behaviour and campaigning efforts are likely to inspire a localised role perception.

Regarding styles of representation – divided into party delegates, voter delegates and trustees – we found effects related to socialisation and the electoral system that, to a large extent, are consistent with our formulated hypotheses. Our analyses show that incumbent MPs are more likely to adhere to a trustee style and less likely to adopt a voter delegate style. A longer period as a party member, in turn, promotes the partisan style and discourages the voter delegate style. Furthermore, when district magnitude is high, candidates are more likely to be party delegates and less likely to be voter delegates.

Serving as an incumbent MP involves gaining valuable experience from various types of decision-making processes – including coalition building and compromising, processes in which it is likely that personal judgement, experience and expertise are valuable aspects – and where it can be difficult to act as a disciplined voter or party delegate. The finding that incumbent MPs are more likely to adhere to a trustee style and less likely to emphasise a voter delegate style is, therefore, not very surprising. Furthermore, incumbents could be more likely to campaign with their past performance as incumbents, providing them with incentives to promote that they can be trusted in the future to make right and just decisions. In contrast to this, new candidates and candidates who do not have the experience of an incumbent could be more likely to promote a voter delegate style, and here we suggest two reasons. First, those nonelected candidates who aspire to incumbency could consider a voter delegate style to be the most appropriate to promote as a strategy to convince voters that they would work on their behalf. Second, in public discussions, it is often emphasised that MPs should act according to the will of voters, even if this will is often unclear, and even though in very few cases, when it comes to politics, there is such a thing as common general will. Thus, the emphasis among nonelected candidates on the voter delegate role could reflect a popular public discourse, rather than a well-reasoned role perception based on experience.

When it comes to the effect of length of party membership, we argue that this is due to party socialisation, and the longer one has been a member, the more likely one is to emphasise a party delegate role, which is what we observed, and the less likely one is to promote a voter delegate role. These findings are not surprising given that years of party membership could indicate that candidates do agree with, and have even taken part in, forming their respective parties' policies. Moreover, it is likely that they have taken part in their parties' activities together with their respective party members for a long time, further strengthening their view that it is their respective parties' policy that should be decisive, as opposed to the will of voters.

In the case of ballot structure, our finding that open ballots make candidates more likely to emphasise a voter delegate style is, in our view, based on similar mechanisms as for the focus of representation – that is, strong preferential voting incentivises candidates to promote a local focus and simultaneously promote the will of their voters (e.g., local voters). Again, we expect that the lack of a statistically significant difference between open and closed ballots is caused by a lack of data (too few elections in the different categories).

Finally, we found that candidates from areas with high district magnitude are more likely to emphasise a party delegate role and less likely to emphasise a voter delegate role. This result points

to the importance of the role of party organisations in campaigning, for example. When district magnitude is high, campaigns are more likely to be controlled by the party organisation and carried out as a joint effort of the candidates of the party. This can incentivise candidates to adhere to a party delegate style in order to further their interests and secure a seat high on the list. In low magnitude districts, however, the voters' party choice is likely to be intertwined with, and influenced by, perceptions of the nominated candidates – which provides candidates with dual principals, the party and the voters, and stronger incentives to prioritise the will of the voters from whom they receive their mandate (i.e., the voters of their district).

The roles of representation are at the heart of democracy. The roles of representation that politicians adopt provide representative democracy with its content and form and manifest the link between voters and their representatives. The manner in which an elected representative ought to behave in his or her role as an elected representative is highly debated and has been ever since the dawn of the representative system. As has become apparent from the empirical endeavours of this chapter, no agreement regarding how an ideal representative ought to behave is in sight. In our analyses, we have found that candidates' role perceptions vary according to career paths, attributes of their parties and the institutional settings of the electoral systems within which they operate. Although patterns are not always straightforward, it appears as if candidates' role perceptions, the style and the focus to which they adhere, are influenced both by patterns of socialisation and rational considerations created by the institutional context that surrounds them. This central democratic debate is destined to continue.

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[1]Candidates running in single-members districts were asked whether they should primarily represent own voters in the constituency, whereas candidates running on party lists were asked whether they should primarily represent own party voters in the constituency.
[2]We consulted various sources for information on district magnitude: election resources on the Internet (www.electionresources.org), the Comparative Political Data Set 2015, the Constituency-Level Elections Archive and, in the case of the Netherlands and Canada, information on their electoral system, with only one constituency in the former country and all constituencies as single-member districts in Canada.
[3]Information on ballot structure was retrieved from the Ace Project (www.aceproject.org) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (www.ipu.org).
[4]Retrieved from the CCS data.
[5]Retrieved from the CCS data.